6/9/69

Dear Dick,

Finally, after sleeping later than usual, I began rereading COUP this morning, preparatory to writing the addition. So, I'll be brief.

Your letter of 6/6 arrived this a.m. The first paragraph reads as though you had read my mind, of the letter I had just written you. On it and everything else about the cases, etc., we agree....And how I would love, in AGENT OSWALD, to say that one of the evidences he both offered and ignored of conspiracy show Hoover's incompetence or error and is not an evidence of conspiracy, although I, trusting him, had so said!

fFrom what you say, one of the possible explanations of the absence of blowback marks on the test cases might be the absnce of any propellant charge or the coincidence of what I'd not suspect, insufficient charge, old stuff.

I skip to your concluding paragraph, for it fascinates in its own way. I have forgotten who, but I think Paul Hoch or one of his friends, made a study that shows about six different versions of that issue of LIFE with the Oswald cover picture. Now I have one in which that figure in the background is very clear, In fact, this is clear past the second generation. Larry Schiller took a LIFE cover for Liebeler, make a negative of it, blew that up almost to Life size, then a picture of that on dispaly was taken, and then that was printed in the UCLA newspaper. Through all of this, that woman is clear. I also have official copies where she is. There is no doubt of the person. I have copies where the brushing also is clear. I'd like to borrow your cover sometime, for this would indicate that LIFE at one time also did some other touchingup.

Thompson is as he was from the first, a fink. He is not alone in an evil trading on Sylvia's name and a more-than-earned reputation for incorruptability and painstaking accuracy. Epstein has done the same in "Counterplot". In my few letters to others on this, I've dubbed him Epsteink. In any event, this was an area in which she could not check his accuracy. On the other hand, Thompson from the first pretended he he was something else, not a critic, that the critics and their work were wrong, etc. Aylvia has one of the best minds. Thatxshe was taken by both is, I think, a reflection of her denied material instincts. She might have made the Yiddische Mama to end all, which is neither adverse critcism not a nasty crack. However, she should have detected some of the more open thieveries and dishonesties in his text. And it is true that they were close. Without intending to, I am certain, she leaked some of my unpublished material to him. She would never do this on purpose. It is, too, a burden to have to remember what can and cannot be said. I have invited her to come here when she has time. I did this in March. She indicated she might during the summer. If she wants, I will then show her other things in Thompson, where his fishonesty shows.

I caution you again Newcomb, as a person and his work. Last Train is horrible. Ask Gary, for I have reason to say so, he doesn't. It is my work that turned Fred on. He told me this in ~~2/68~~ 11/67, when I spent a week with him. And what he had done when he accurately detected my suspicions pleased and impresssed me. I'll show it to you when youbare next here. However, as time passed and I had

a chance to check it out, it collapsed. That is, some did. Some is solid. What he did for me (now part of his slides) on the Oswald-rifle picture is very solid. He has carried this forward well as far as he has gone but he and his photographer friend have missed the technical things you'd not have expected them to. Of course, we all miss things. Now, there is no doubt of the alteration of the Willis film and its misrepresentation. Both LIFE and ITEK confirm my original observation, that it shows a man on the knoll. But Fred's evidence is not good. That a train was there means nothing unless we have the whole story of the train. The tree was not altered as he says. He compares what cannot be, pictures taken from different positions, with different lenses. What had originally impressed me, his belief that the mullions on the pergola were altered, I now find simple explanation for (enlargement and sun and shadow). More than one train is known to have been there. I mention at least one in the first book. But to use this in connection with the walking-man pictures is unwarranted, especially because everything thus far said of them ~~xxxxxx~~ does not make sense and is opposed to what we can establish. His attack on Sprague is not fair, especially because of the correspondence he was carrying on simultaneously. Why not check with Gary about this and the work itself, because Fred is carrying on a rotten, and dishonest campaign against me and I think it not best that you listen to me. I d prefer that you not so that none of these poor souls can later torture it. They do this regularly. Gary recounts some in a letter also received today. Let me make this general observation: the only dependable work in Calif is by Paul, Hal and Jim in the Bay area. Paul is an ultraconservative scholar in his approach, Jim has brilliant suspicions and follws them solidly, and Hal, who is now busier than he was, combined elements of both and has been very helpful to me, as the others also have. I think you will be well advised to say nothing you wouldn't want proclaimed in Times Square to any of the others and would be better advised to give them as little as possible in writing for they have an inexhaustible capacity for twisting and misusing.

I've been phoning Tom for an hour. His line stays busy. If I hear that he hasn't sent the Archives pictures, I'll add a note. Sorry to inflict the typos on you. No time. One other thing on Fred: He tried to sell me on the idea that the entire Z film was remade immediately, and he believed it.

Best,